

Philosophisches Kolloquium WS 21/22

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Thema: „Deceiving, Debasing and De-Belief-ing Skeptical Scenarios“

One of the most original contributions to the recent literature on skepticism is Jonathan Schaffer's (2010) „Debasing Demon“. The traditional Cartesian Deceiving Demon prevents one from gaining knowledge by providing false appearances or misleading evidence that lead one into forming false beliefs. Whereas the Debasing Demon prevents knowledge by making one form beliefs that are not properly based on one's evidence (reasons, propositional justifiers). I discuss various over-looked or misunderstood aspects of the debasing demon scenario and draw some connections to some potentially controversial principles about higher-order evidence and defeat. I also compare the possibility of a 'De-belief-ing' demon, who makes it the case that one simply has no beliefs whatsoever, though introspectively it still appears exactly as if one has the normal range of beliefs. To finish, I offer my own suggestion as to how to resist the debasing and de-belief-ing skeptical scenarios and also explore why it is that the traditional Cartesian deceiving demon scenario is intuitively more gripping or worrying as a skeptical threat.